

## Epistolatory.

To Bro. David Shindle and wife, Funkstown, Md:

I do not know whether I promised to write to you when I left over a year ago, but whether I did or not I am often prompted when my thoughts flash over the past twenty years of my life in Maryland to write to you. I often think of the dear friends and brethren back yonder in "My Maryland" and of none so frequently as I do of you. Of course there is a cause for this. Good fatherly counsel given in time of perplexity, brotherly love shown in words of welcome, and substantial deeds of kindness are not soon obliterated from memory. The ties of friendship formed by kindred Christian spirits cannot be easily broken, and indeed sometimes we only realize how strong our attachment is for one another when socially severed in person by the distance of many miles. Though I am absent in body I am present in spirit in many of my meditative moments, and had I the wings of a dove often would I fly away to meet you, and we would talk together of the incidents that marked the journey of the Christian life within the last several years. My migration from amidst a faithful united band of brethren in the East to the fragmentary disjointed missions in this portion of the Miami valley was not the most pleasant experience of my life. I now know what it is to have one's years poured full of discontent for the first dose, and what it is to be disappointed through delinquency and cold indifference as a last dose, all the result of bad training in the old G. B. school. I simply mean there was not enough union in the first place and not enough faithfulness up to this time in the discharge of gospel duty—not progressive enough on the line of gospel teaching.

Well I suppose you have heard dear brother that I do like St Paul with the Corinthians, preach and let these hands minister to my necessity. This I like to do and my bread tastes all the sweeter for it, for the poor must have the gospel preached, but then I have a feeling of discontent at the loss of former hard earnings in making this change.

I often think of the many good citizens and some brethren and sisters about your age that have gone to their eternal reward since we left Hagerstown. One by one like autumn leaves we drop from this stage of action and who will be next the Lord only knows. "Be ye also ready for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Our daughters are both in the West, we are lonely. As infirmity and age are gaining the ascendancy over you, in your "patience possess ye your souls." May your last days be your best days. Farewell until the day of eternal morn dawn on us beyond the river.

Fraternally and affectionately.

EDWARD S. MILLER.

Dayton, Ohio.

## Thoughts—What Are They?

If one's thoughts could be undestandingly put on paper as they flit through the mind, what a combination of stange ideas would be produced during a life of three score years and ten.

Whilst busily engaged in some manner of exercise, the words of the Master came vividly into my mind, where he said "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life; and few their be that find it." Then the next thought that follows—why is the gate strait and the way narrow that leads to so desirable a place as life, where pain and death are forever excluded?—and why only a few of so vast a multitude of travelers that will find it? The critic might answer on this wise: Why is it that such a strenuous effort is required to store up the mind with knowledge and understanding and why only a few are renowned and eminent? If our acquisitiveness prompts us to dig for gold, or silver, what painful endurance and self-denial must we sacrifice for it? Why can we not pick it up in the field or in the woods? Would it not be just as valuable? and would not many more seek for it? And, why is it that it requires a life time of anxious, diligent, increasing prayer and supplication and patient waiting to secure the pearl of great price? Even after having found it we are filled with joy unspeakable? How often must we feel a weight of poverty and leanness, and helplessness and feel like saying,

"He has brought me in a way I know not," and "led me in paths that I have not known."

By and by after we are changed from mortality to immortality we will have new eyes, and new ears, and we will know all about these mysteries that we look at through a glass darkly. "Then let us not be weary in well doing."

JOHN REIFF.

Green Tree, Pa.

## To W. J. H. Bauman.

Having just finished reading Bro. Bauman's letter in No. 13, I feel inclined to offer, by way of comfort to him and others, a few lines written over the signature of John B. Gough. What a pleasing thought, that though we lament the fact that death has now sealed his lips, we can still read the pages of wholesome advice and encouragement which he took the trouble to write for our benefit. And may we all try to imitate, in this respect, his good example.

"What is minority? The chosen heroes of this earth have been in a minority. There is not a social, political, or religious privilege that you enjoy to-day that was not bought for you by the blood and tears of the minority.

It is the minority that have vindicated humanity in every struggle.

It is the minority that have stood in the van of every moral conflict, and achieved all that is noble in the history of the world. You will find that each generation has been always busy in gathering up the scattered ashes of the martyred heroes of the past, to deposit them in the golden urn of a nation's history. Look at Scotland, where they are erecting monuments—to whom?—to the Covenanters. Ah, they were in the minority. Read their history, if you can, without the blood tingling to the tips of your fingers. These were the minority that, through blood, and tears, and bootings, and scouragings—dyeing the waters with their blood, any staining the heather with their gore—fought the glorious battle of religious freedom.

Minority! if a man stand up for the right, though the right be on the scaffold, while the wrong sits in the seat of government; if he stand for the right, though he eat with the right and truth, a wretched crust; if he walk with obloquy and scorn in the by-lanes and streets, while the falsehood and wrong ruffle in its silken attire, let him remember that wherever the right and truth are there are always

"Troops of beautiful, tall angels"

gathered round him, and God himself stands within the dim future and keeps watch over his own.

If a man stands for the right and truth, though every man's finger be pointed at him, though every woman's lip be curled at him in scorn, he stands in a majority; for God and good angels are with him, and greater are they that are for him than all they that be against him."

We have often wondered how the people could hate Christ, and why they now hate his followers; but Jesus said it was and would be so, and we feel confident that he understood why though we may not, and also that he will provide a rich reward for all the faithful.

LAURA SLOTTER.

Columbiana, O., 4-4-1886.

The Church has not cast anchor over an uncertain Bible or an uncertain creed. If it has, then it has no message to deliver and no authority to lift up its voice in the name of God and His Christ.—DR. H. BONAR.

One good mother is worth a hundred schoolmasters. In the home she is the lode-stone of all hearts and lodestar to all eyes. Christianity should be taught at the mothers knee; it seldom is really taught elsewhere save in the school of suffering—EX.

A vacillating talk, a backwardness to take a bold and decided line, a readiness to conform to the world, a hesitating witness for Christ, a lingering tone of religion—all these make up a sure recipe for bringing a blight upon the garden of your soul.—BISHOP RYLE.

## A Preserved Church.

When an old building which had been used at Basel as a Carthusian convent was demolished in 1776, a most interesting relic of true devotion was brought to light. It is mentioned by D'Aubigne, and shows how God kept alive his religion in the darkest periods of the world.

A poor Carthusian saint had written his humble confession of Christ, and, having placed it in a box, he deposited the whole in the wall of his cell, where it was discovered long ages afterward. The following are his words: "Oh, most merciful God, I know that I can only be saved, and satisfy thy righteousness by the merit, the innocent suffering, and death of thy well beloved Son. Holy Jesus! my salvation is in thy hands. Thou can't not withdraw the hands of thy love from me, for they have created and redeemed me. Thou hast inscribed my name with a pen of iron in rich mercy, and so nothing can efface it, on thy side, thy hands, and thy feet."

Such glimpses of the religious life in a distant period furnish for us a most profitable study. We plainly see that the Christian religion holds within itself the sacred deposit of essential vitality, a germ of life that may find its nourishment even within the dreary walls of the convent. In an unenlightened and persecuting age such seclusion may have formed part of God's providential method of perpetuating the church. We are now permitted to enjoy many rich benefits from such sources—blessings of hallowed meditation, of song and testimony, such as the one above recorded. In this way God caused these saints to be "the light of the world" in this nineteenth century.

"Glory be to the Father, the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen."

## Wasted Powder.

During the engagement between the iron-clad Monitor and the Merrimac at Hampton Roads, in the American War, the Merrimac at one time ceased firing at the Monitor. Coming down the spar deck and observing a division of marines standing at ease, the commander, Lieut. Jones, inquired.

"Why are you not firing, Mr. Eggleston?"

"Our powder is very precious," replied the officer, "and after two hours, incessant firing I find I can do her about as much damage by snapping my thumb at her every two minutes and a half."

This style of warfare reminds one of the results of some skeptical bombardments that are progressing. It is easy to crack jokes to amuse infidels, to encourage skeptics, to win the applause of hoodlums and rowdies, and to make people who know nothing of the gospel, very courageous and defiant. It is also easy to blaze away at doctrines not found in the Bible, and at the errors and follies of men whose opinions and lives are not according to the Sacred Scriptures; but when all this is done, what does it amount to? The foundation of God standeth sure. The Church of Christ is built upon a rock; and people who know the Lord, and who know what they believe and why they believe it, are not moved from the hope of the Gospel by such influences.

In fact it is a waste of powder. Skeptics have been blazing away for hundreds of years, and they are accomplishing about as much as they could accomplish by snapping their fingers at God and his word. Above the rage of the heathen and the vain imaginations of the people, "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, and the Lord shall have them in derision." And when he shall put to silence gainsayers and blasphemers, how blessed shall all they be who put their trust in him.—THE ARMORY.

Lord, with thee upon the mountain

"It is good" for us to stay,

\*But the valleys need the toilers,

"We must work while it is day,"

That the harvest may be ready

When the reaping time shall come,

And the sheaves be safely garnered,

Angels chanting "harvest home."

—Wm. JAMES.